

INFORMATION REPORT

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SUBJECT Democratic Republic of Vietnam Military
Activities in Cochin China

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1. The Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) military headquarters for Cochinchina is now at Xom Sinh (106-49, 11-09). Tran Van Tra is still acting Commander-in-Chief of DRV forces in the south. He is not an able commander, however, and attained his present position only because of his membership in the Communist Party of Indochina (PCI). The best DRV general in Cochinchina is Nguyen Chanh.

2. Ngo Hong Gioc, a half-Chinese metis known as "The Tiger of the West", who was not a PCI member, was assassinated in late August 1961. Trung², who served with Gioc under General Nguyen Chanh, is believed to have been instrumental in the assassination.

3. A DRV arms convoy travelling to Cochinchina from the north via back roads, is now west of Ben Cat (106-35, 11-08). The convoy is composed of two regiments which are relieved at the edge of each Intersector by two local regiments. Each soldier is equipped with an extra gun. It is possible that General Chu Van Tan is accompanying the convoy.

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1. [] Comment. A France-Asia report from Saigon, dated 18 September 1951, contains this same information [] to the Bao Dai Government. A France-Asia report of 3 April 1951 referred to Gioi as a battalion commander and chairman of Intersector IX. See []

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Comment. Gho's assassination, together with that of Huynh Van Nghs, reported in [] may signal a systematic effort by the DRV to purge non-Communists regardless of their fighting ability and apparent loyalty to the DRV cause.

2. Comment. Possibly Le Van Trung.

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3. [] Comment. Previous statements by this source that Chu Van Tan has been appointed Commander-in-Chief of DRV forces in the south have not been confirmed by other sources.

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